

Civilization 300

Chapter 300 - The Vanguard of the Northern Route Army

Blue smoke rose from the pot where saltpeter boiled, reaching into the ancient skies. As the wind passed, waves rippled across the lake of Texcoco, like the changing tides of a heart's lake. In an instant, the tide rose, and just as quickly, it fell, but what remained unchanged were the treasures at the bottom of the lake.

Xiulote extricated himself from Talaya's embrace and slowly stood up. Mere quarters before, a strong impulse had driven him to step forward, facing the stern Aweit and ensuring the safety of the person in charge of gunpowder. But now, after the conflict, when he recalled the promises of starry nights and considered the interference of desire, his heart became clear through the baptism of worldly affairs.

He used his hand to prevent the potter girl who wanted to rely on him and gently shook his head.

"Talaya, you have great talent. Continue your research on gunpowder,"

After speaking, Xiulote gave Talaya, who was standing there stupefied, a deep look and then turned to leave alone, his strides resolute.

Bertade sighed. The Head Warrior knew the young man too well and understood that he had made a decision. With no other choice but to follow, he shook his head and caught up.

The sun set suddenly, and the Lake Capital City alternated between light and dark. In the High Priest's Mansion, an eternal bonfire burned, an everlasting light in the eyes of the youth.

"Xiulote, my child. Just an ordinary woman, even if she is beautiful, it's just as well if she's gone. Why oppose the King for her?"

The High Priest frowned slightly, looking at his grandson to whom he had devoted so much, his words carrying an admonishment.

Xiulote shook his head calmly.

"She is a subordinate I value, an important research craftsman. I cannot let her be taken away. I am in charge of the Divine Revelation Place, Heavenly Fire Island, and the new barracks. My followers, priests, craftsmen, and the new army... Grandfather, I am no longer a child dependent on others..."

"Now, I am a leader, the mainstay of tens of thousands, with thousands of subjects willing to die for me. These people rely on me, and I must protect them. Even Aweit cannot treat my important managers as he pleases and cause our group to lose cohesion. You once told me that eagles must dominate the skies, jaguars must dominate the land, and kings must dominate the people."

Upon hearing such words, the High Priest let out a hearty laugh. He patted Xiulote's shoulder, refraining from patting the young man's head any longer.

"My fledgling eagle has grown up, ready to rule the forest by himself and soar above all under the heavens."

Then, the High Priest gazed at his most outstanding descendant, instructing him with care.

"My child, continue to hone your ambition. In the core of power, the strong always cooperate and confront each other, confront and compromise. The Alliance only recognizes the strong, and the rules are only there to restrain the commoners. You must be strong enough to inherit everything I have now, to reach even higher summits.

Remember, in the jungles of Mexico, supreme power never naturally falls into one's hands as fruit does; it is always accompanied by fierce contention. As the old saying goes, only that which can be forcibly taken can be peacefully handed over... Of course, you need to pay attention to strategy..."

The night grew deep, and the bonfire gradually went out. Xiulote lay in bed, holding the little green snake in his arms, feeling its softness and coldness, contemplating obedience and wildness, and thus fell into a deep sleep.

The next day, Xiulote got up early for training, as usual. After breakfast, he carried a wooden box on his back and headed to Montezuma Palace.

The advance force of the northern road was about to set out, and the armies began to draw troops. Yesterday, his grandfather had agreed to a thousand Temple Guards, to prioritize familiarity with crossbows, and to send a Priesthood along with the army. Now, he intended to request his directly subordinate samurai from the King.

When he saw Aweit again, the King's expression was calm and majestic, and in his hands, he held open a book of "Noble Law."

"Xiulote, go and talk to Alisa first, she has been longing for you for a while,"

Xiulote nodded and headed for the back garden.

Alisa was still dressed in white. Seeing the young man, she approached joyfully and embraced him gently.

Xiulote fell silent for a moment, then opened the wooden box behind him. He took out the still-slumbering Aweiloztli sculpture and handed it to Alisa's embrace.

"I will soon be setting out. Little Aviloztli will keep you company."

Alisa held the little golden eagle, tenderly stroking its soft little head.

The Aweiloztli opened its eyes, glanced at the girl in white with confusion, and made a puzzled "chirp?" Then, recognizing a kind person, it let out short and joyful "yips" and began to nuzzle with its neck.

Xiulote sat silently, not speaking.

Alisa blinked her bright eyes and spoke.

"Xiulote, I'm making fast progress with my herbal studies. Thank you for the Chief Priest's heritage. Soon, I'll be able to prepare a drink that will cheer you up."

Xiulote nodded, listening quietly.

"These two days, you and father both seem a bit down!"

Xiulote raised his head, considering the girl's innocent expression, then lowered his head again without a word.

"I can feel your moods. Father is depressed with anger. Yesterday, he beat one of his trusted guards and then drove Uncle Gillim out of the palace, forbidding him to come back for several days."

Xiulote raised his head again, surprised. Why would Aweit punish Gillim?

"Gillim? Why is that?"

"Hmm, it seems Uncle Gillim made a serious mistake, and father felt offended, so he was very angry."

"I see... Then, in Alisa's eyes, what kind of person is Gillim?"

"Uncle Gillim is always serious. He never cares about himself but looks after everyone, no matter how small the issue. He's especially concerned about his younger brother. Last month when his brother fell ill, he traveled far to the southern city-state, bringing back several renowned witch doctors, and came back much thinner. Thankfully, his brother soon recovered."